RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

ACTION PROPOSAL

CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

thru

"suave-o-metrics"

C S I

CONSULTANT SERVICES, INC.

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PRESIDENT

4304 Balcones Woods Drive
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"suave-e-metries"

The Psuedo-Science of Constructive Conflict

ACTION

PROPOSAL

Prepared for

Superintendents
Residential Schools for the Blind
United States of America

Prepared by

Dr. John P. Best, President
Consultant Services, Inc.
Austin, Texas

December, 1979

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Superintendents
Residential Schools for the Blind
United States of America

Dear Colleagues:

These are very trying times for visually handicapped Americans and for those concerned with providing quality human services programs. Because of the pressures of inflation and other economic uncertainties, key political actors, policy groups, and chief state department officials have reacted in many instances by reducing the resources available to residential schools for the blind.

This is occurring at the very time that legislation requiring adequate and appropriate services to visually handicapped Americans mandates more effective services to all who require them. The resultant dichotomy has caused a perplexing dilemma. How is it possible to provide more and better services to greater numbers of persons with reduced dollar resources and expanding inflation cancerously eroding the already overstressed budget situation?

To further complicate the picture, two aggressive consumer thrusts seem bent on a collision course. Handicapped consumers and parents are militating with increasing vigor for their civil rights at the same time John Q. Public is demanding a reduction in government spending and government services.

Once again, schools for the blind are caught between an irresistable force and an immovable object. Obviously, extreme danger is imminent.

<u>It is quite clear that the only hope for schools for the blind is to be found in the arena of effectively and successfully influencing the decision makers. Otherwise, the existing crunch will continue to drive our residential schools further along the eventual but inevitable present spiral to destruction.</u>

To help resolve the problem, CSI has developed a dynamic workshop called "Suave-o-metries", the psuedo-science of constructive conflict. It's fairly inexpensive and non-threatening to participants, yet it provides the full nine yards on getting what you want from the system as a constructive protagonist.

This proposal has been prepared especially for Superintendents of residential schools for the blind by CSI in order to assist in combating the forces which are presently negatively influencing the affairs of the visually handicapped and those who truly want to serve them. As you read through it, you'll quickly see the high potential it provides. Remember, too, that CSI will be happy to work with you in perfecting the details appropriate to your unique situation.

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https://archive.org/details/suaveometricspse00amer

Also, we at CSI would like to take this opportunity to remind you that our expert consultant staff is available and stands ready to assist you in a variety of ways. This proposal is targeted toward one specific workshop activity which we feel addresses a particular need of schools for the blind at this point in time.

Other numerous and varied consultant services which you may wish to consider are also available through CSI. For your handy reference, a brochure explaining our operation is inserted on the back cover of this proposal. Just let us know how we may be of service.

Sincerely,

John P. Best

John P. Best, President

JPB/mvw

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CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT ACTION PROPOSAL

Prelude to the Storm

Barriers Confronting Visually Handicapped Americans

The following basic issues are central to the expressed and implied concerns of the blind of this nation. A critical review of the system shows these obstacles to be real and very frustrating to consumers, parents, and professionals alike. Therefore, the barriers cited must be removed if an adequate service delivery system is to become a functioning reality. Briefly stated, the barriers are:

Lack of appropriate management of funds and resources

Denial of effective consumer participation

Frequent inadequacy of direct services

Obstructive nature of agency defensiveness

Severe shortage of trained manpower

Ineffective application of existing technology to blind consumer problems

Obfuscatory tendencies regarding identification and tracking of funds intended for programs for the blind

These seven barriers are alluded to repeatedly by blind persons and by parents of blind children. Therefore, it is quite clear that they represent prominent areas of interest and concern.

Economic Concerns Impacting the Public

It is clear that the needs and concerns of the handicapped are secondary in the minds of most Americans to the day to day economic problems

that confront them. The public is reacting strongly to pressures caused by:

Inflation

Increased taxes

Deficit spending

Perceived government waste

Skyrocketing costs of necessities such as food, utilities, and gasoline

Whether or not all of these factors are indications of government failure is beside the point. The fact is that the American public has lost confidence in government in many respects, and that loss of confidence has caused reactionary actions that impact all government functions.

Reaction and Backlash

Concerns and frustrations relative to the problems of the handicapped are expressed by the passage of such legislation as P.L. 94-142 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act Ammendments. Strong consumer efforts are being mounted to force "the system" into compliance with consumer perceived legislative intent.

Public frustration with rising costs and a lowered standard of living are reflected in Proposition 13 type legislation. Also, pressure on legislators and other government leaders has resulted in indiscriminate budget cuts to human services programs in many parts of the country.

Crisis Confrontation Climate

Because of these factors and forces, the stage is set for several types of critical confrontation. Quite frequently, the protagonists are these:

Parents vs. School

School vs. State Department

State Department vs. Legislature

Handicapped vs. Agencies

Handicapped Consumers vs. Legislature & Public

Any combination of the above, ad infinitum

A good part of the problem is the fact that the pressure of the situation has produced a climate of adversarial relationships so widespread that it is sometimes difficult to sort out the issues of critical import.

The Bottom Line for Residential Schools

Today's political reality, if residential schools are to survive these problems, is that such schools must both separately and collectively develop a strong power base of support. Central to that power base is the backing and good will of informed parents and friends. Groups of individuals, such as parents, must understand the dynamics of the situation and also must know how to present the case effectively and successfully.

It is critical to the survival of the residential school to establish mechanisms which foster and promote cooperation and understanding between school personnel and parents. Parents and educators need to learn how to work together to promote the cause of education to the betterment of handicapped children. School personnel and parents must not allow themselves to be maneuvered into an adversial position in regard to one another. Instead, they need to join forces to influence the larger system in behalf of their mutual desire to more adequately serve the children. Consultant Services, Inc. has developed a workshop designed to foster and promote just such capabilities. It is explained in the final section of this Action Proposal.

Surviving the Holocaust

Knowledge Is Strength

Several categories of knowledge are essential ingredients of successful efforts to impact the system. These need to be understood by parents and educators alike if a meaningful partnership is to emerge.

Each individual needs to evaluate and understand his or her own feelings regarding the situation.

An understanding of the dynamics of politics and decision making as it impacts allocations of resources and the development of policies for residential schools is essential.

An understanding of who or what stands in the way is critical. It is imperative to know the opponent.

Knowledge of the specific requirements of the residential program relative to the provision of proper services is required.

Specific tactics which can be utilized throughout the process of influencing constructive change must be fully understood.

It is only through knowledge that strength equal to the task can truly be developed. So, knowledge is strength and also power.

How To Get What You Want

Getting what is wanted and needed to assure quality residential school programs and services for blind and visually handicapped children is the name of the game. The following are essential ingredients of success:

Adequate technical knowledge

Knowledge of the opponent

Forwarning

A reasonable plan of action

Accurate knowledge regarding how to influence the decision makers

These are the basics around which the effective plan to preserve and improve the residential school is constructed. Each is critical.

The Success Plan

"suave-o-metrics" in Brief

Suave-o-metrics is referred to as the psuedo-science of constructive conflict. It is a technique which has beed developed by Consultant Services, Inc. for the purpose of assisting interested parties in becoming more effective and successful advocates for handicapped children. Central to getting what you need and want for the children is always the ability to both identify and influence key decision makers. That is how the appropriate laws get enacted, how the dollar resources get committed, how the quality program designs are developed, and how the system is coerced into providing what is necessary to give the children a fighting chance at a normal, happy, dignified life as they grow toward becoming adult members of society.

To that end, CSI has developed a dynamic workshop called "suave-o-metrics", based on the psuedo-science of constructive conflict. The result of the workshops is better informed, more effective advocates....whether they be parents, professionals, or other friends of the handicapped. CSI feels it will work very well with staff, parents, or both in residential schools for the blind. It is fairly inexpensive, and participants get solid, useful materials to keep....thereby reinforcing what they have learned through the workshop experience. Any combination of parents, professionals, and others can participate jointly without friction or discomfort. Yet, they get the full nine yards on dealing effectively with each other and the system as constructive protagonists.

CSI is also ready, willing, and able to provide numerous services. Details are available in the enclosed brochure.

The CSI Action Proposal

We propose to conduct a "Suave-o-metric Constructive Conflict Workshop" for you. The potential benefits to your program and thus to the children you serve are, in our opinion, very great indeed. The workshop should have several positive results:

a greatly strengthened parent-school relationship,

an informed constituent core of supportive advocates for the residential school, and

a workable system from which you can develop a specific plan of action to protect your school and expand your sphere of influence on behalf of the students you serve.

CSI proposes to provide:

a CSI workshop facilitator,

all books, pamphlets, and materials necessary in order to conduct the workshop (a complete set for each participant),

an entrance and exit conference with the Superintendent and/or others designated, and

the Constructive Conflict Workshop itself.

The school would need to provide:

an adequate site for the workshop,

a minimum of 25 paid participants,

a mutually acceptible time to hold the workshop, and

airfare and all expenses for the facilitator.

If you are interested, please contact CSI and we'll be pleased to work out the details or answer any questions you have. We feel certain you will be very satisfied with our services, and more importantly that visually handicapped children will benefit considerably from the resultant activity.

Just let us know how we can be of service to you. We'll do our best to meet your needs.

CONSULTANT SERVICES, INC.

C S I

* * *

- LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
- ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS
- RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
- MANAGEMENT SERVICES
- ADVOCACY SYSTEMS DESIGN
- RESEARCH & PLANNING
- PROBLEM SOLVING
- TRAINING

* * *

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CONSULTANT SERVICES, INC. (CSI) has extensive capabilities for providing consultative services to local, state, and national agencies or entities; institutions; consumer organizations; and business or industrial organizations. CSI's core staff has more than a half century of collective experience in the management of educational and human service programs involving total budgets in excess of $100,000,000.

CSI is founded on firm principles of honesty, integrity, human dignity, and a sincere intent to provide workable mechanisms to improve the human condition with maximum cost effectiveness.

CSI prefers to emphasize projects with greatest potential for high impact and particular professional significance. Staff are experienced in all areas of human exceptionality, and have had extensively successful experience in designing and administering remediative educational, rehabilitative, developmental, facility, and support programs or services.

CSI operates on the premise that the combined expertise and abilities of a team of individuals with an extremely successful track record cutting across disability categories, professional areas, and human services programs can be highly beneficial to and practical for administrators, managers and policy makers whose available time is frequently consumed by immediate organizational exigencies.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE INCLUDE:

- Agency Management
- Facility Administration & Design
- Legislative Consultation
- Human Services Law
- Special Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Rights of Handicapped
- Developmental Disabilities Services
- Support Services & Systems
- School Law
- Fiscal Management
- Research
- Grantsmanship
- Project Design
- Personnel Training
- Casework Management
- Creative Planning

CSI will only accept assignments which have been mutually explored and found to be in keeping with the philosophical and moral convictions of the central staff, but once committed, will provide thorough and effective services of the highest quality and will see the endeavor through to final implementation. Projects will be conducted only by persons with proven expertise directly related to the task at hand.

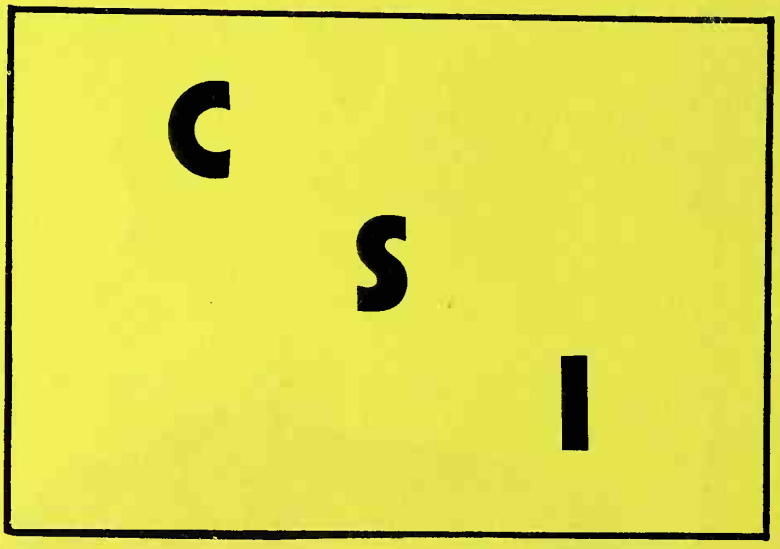
CSI will respond to any reasonable inquiry regarding services available. A brief letter outlining the matter for consideration will begin the process. CSI will respond with a suggested mechanism for analyzing the situation and arriving at a mutually acceptable proposal. No fees will be charged until both parties have finalized an agreement so preliminary discussions and correspondence are conducted on a "no risk" basis. Preliminary exploration will be kept confidential.

AVAILABLE SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Consultation
- Planning
- Drafting of Legislation
- Development of Regulations
- Proposal Writing
- Systems Design
- Problem Solving
- Title V Civil Rights Compliance
- Management Services & Studies
- Fiscal Design
- Project Reviews
- Program Evaluation
- Facilities Planning
- Accountability Design
- Recruitment of Professionals
- Manpower Enhancement

DR. JOHN P. BEST
PRESIDENT

ACTION PROPOSAL



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